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UNIVERSITY OF
The Open University
Faculty of Education and Language Studies
Department of Languages

**Internet-mediated intercultural foreign language
education: access and opportunities within and beyond
the classroom in China's tertiary institutions**

Liang Wang

Dissertation Submitted in Fulfilment for the
Degree of Master of Research in Education

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Abstract

It is widely promoted that an intercultural approach be adopted to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in foreign language education (FLE) and suggested that the use of Internet technologies might greatly increase the opportunities of enhancing learners' ICC. While academic institutions are exploring such potential benefits, researchers caution that technology alone is insufficient and simply throwing students into networked surfing and encountering does not necessarily lead to intercultural learning and ICC development. This suggests that a new balance must be found between technology and pedagogy.

This research reports a survey of Chinese college teachers' and learners' perceptions of classroom instruction in intercultural activities, especially with Internet mediation. Data were collected by means of Internet questionnaire including semi-structured questions with respect to setting, input, task tools, classroom activities, assessment, and problems which are central to the kind of task-based approach that facilitates intercultural teaching and learning. The findings suggest that while the importance of developing ICC has been recognized, language skills and cultural knowledge are still the focus of the class. Textbooks remain the predominant resource and tool for information input and Internet information tools are used in support of expanding the knowledge sources. However, communication tools are much less used. The findings do not reveal how activities were undertaken with Internet tools due to insufficient data but a general positive attitude towards classroom instruction with technology mediation was identified. The problems lie in technical support, pedagogical framework and time constraints. Implications were made in theory and practice for pedagogical development in ICFLE in China.

Chapter 1 Research Aims & Objectives

1.1 Introduction

Since Deng Xiaoping's Reform and Opening-up policies in 1978, China has witnessed dramatic developments in foreign language education (FLE). The surging amount of information exchange and interpersonal communication with the outside world have made intercultural encounters inevitable, and these constitute the cultural and communicative challenges of developing sufficient numbers of foreign language (FL) professionals with effective communication proficiency. Aside from commercial and diplomatic-political interactions world-wide at various official levels, FL classrooms at educational institutions have been a privileged space for studying language, culture and communication via direct and indirect exposure to and interactions with other cultures.

In our present society, described as a global village due to communication and transportation development, intercultural encounters have become much more frequent and complex. In particular, the popularization of the Internet makes intercultural communication possible in every corner where the network is available, to the extent that one might ask the following questions: Does language teaching with access to information and communication technology (ICT) help learners to be more intercultural in China? What do teachers and learners need to do (and how and why) to enable effective interaction through contact with and experience of differences either in physical or virtual space? How do learners and teachers go beyond traditional language classrooms to a broader 'e-learning' society for intercultural learning in the Chinese context? These questions outline the focus of my dissertation.

1.2 Aims & objectives

Intercultural FLE in China has a relatively short history and practices differ from place to place. Not until the national syllabi for English Majors and Non-English Majors in Higher Education (MoE 2000, 2004) were published, was cross/intercultural communicative competence (CCC/ICC) documented as a goal of FLE and the Internet a learning tool to be employed in course design. On the other hand, due to uneven economic and social development, whilst a few institutions have ventured into online language courses with an intercultural dimension, many still use textbooks as sole cultural input and teach culture as discrete knowledge to be memorized.

In Western countries Internet-mediated intercultural foreign language education (Belz & Thorne 2006), the study of developing language learners' (and teachers') intercultural communicative competence (Byram 1997), lends itself quite naturally to Internet assistance for intercultural exploration and exchanges. So, it would be interesting to learn what the practical implications are for FLE in China, which differs from the west in educational culture, policy, resources, channels, institutional settings and mechanisms, and pedagogical considerations.

Taking these complex situations into account, my research aims are to explore the challenges and potentials in the current 'ecology' (Gu 2006) of intercultural FLE at tertiary level in China, especially teachers' and learners' experiences (if any) and perceptions of using Internet technologies for intercultural language teaching and learning activities. To achieve these aims, I attempt to look at a range of data reflecting how teachers and learners use the Internet to carry out tasks in terms of institutional policy, teaching/learning goals, teaching resources and tools, activity designs, assessment and problems.

1.3 Outline

Having specified the research purpose in this introduction, the next chapter will conduct a detailed review of the existing theories relevant to my research topic so as to frame the research enquiries. It will be followed by Chapter 3, discussing research design with regard to data collection methods and ethical considerations. In the subsequent Chapters 4, 5 and 6, data collection and analysis will be reported, and data will be discussed and interpreted. Finally a summary of findings will be given and implications for theory and further research will be provided.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Aspects of ICFLE

Belz and Thorne (2006) recently created the acronym ICFLE (Internet-mediated intercultural foreign language education) to refer to various prevailing models and methods for intercultural activities that make use of Internet technologies. The impact of this coined ‘non-sectarian umbrella term’ (Thorne 2006: 3) is significant. It symbolizes a new stage of pedagogical development in the fields of FLE and Internet-mediated intercultural projects. As Thorne (2006) explains, this acronym highlights the intercultural dimension explicitly which other terms like telecollaboration fail to demonstrate. In addition, ICFLE underpins pedagogical principles with a more humanistic and holistic perspective of ‘education’ than of ‘teaching’, ‘learning’ or ‘acquisition’.

According to Thorne (2006), there are four major types of ICFLE. Of these, telecollaboration is the model that offers international class-to-class exchanges within institutionalized settings, requiring intensive coordination from syllabus negotiation to technological preparation (e.g. O’Dowd 2006). A second model is tandem learning, which sets up the pairing of individuals with an interest in learning each other’s language for mutual benefit. A third one is to organize partnerships between learners and local expert speakers of the target language via Internet connections (e.g. King 2006). The last type is students’ engagement in established Internet communities for exploration and exchanges (e.g. Gao 2007). Whatever the model is, a shared feature is the inclusion of participants outside the classroom via Internet technologies, the goals being to achieve linguistic and pragmatic development, better understanding of one’s own and other cultures and of the processes of intercultural communication (Thorne 2006).

However, as most of the reported cases were undertaken in/across Western countries in realization of integrating technology-mediation within and beyond face-to-face classrooms, there remains the concern of how to frame the pedagogical and praxiological implications in China, where monolingual cultures dominate. While the variety of social and institutional cultures can determine diverse pedagogical implementations of FLE, technology is another influential factor in that it is also economically and culturally bound (Belz & Thorne 2006), which can result in preferences of technological tools in task design, and of teaching instruction in different cultures. As O'Dowd (2005, quoted in Thorne 2006) points out, any simple adoption of the models will end up in trouble since local conditions, expectations and learning goals all differ. This complexity suggests the necessity of investigating and understanding the local context, or culture, before devising and conducting an intercultural project within the framework of ICFLE.

In what follows I intend to examine the literature on this ICFLE framework with respect to pedagogy and technology. I will first review the context of Chinese tertiary FLE and describe the following areas – the ‘ecology’ (Zhong & Shen 2002; Gu 2006) of FLE in tertiary institutions, the pedagogical approaches currently adopted in FLE and the technology mediation as a dimension to classroom instruction.

2.2 FLE in China

2.2.1 The ecology of FLE in China

Broadly speaking, two main factors determine the language classroom in Chinese society – ‘the large population and the rapidly developing economy’ (Cortazzi & Jin 1996:178). The former affords rather limited educational resources in language classes (e.g., the student-teacher ratio is normally 40:1). This restricted distribution of resources reinforces the already strong tradition of using the transmission model of learning (Jin & Cortazzi 1998).

The latter stimulates students to take advantage of using a foreign language to find a better-paid job. This job-oriented motivation views learning a language as an instrument (Gu 2005). However, the transmission mode often neglects the students' needs in interpersonal communication skills whereas on the students' part, the overemphasis on obtaining various language certificates via taking examinations makes them attach less importance to the essence of FLE. These two orientations hinder each other and result in learners' love-and-hate mentality towards language learning (Gu 2005). Clearly, this trend is running against the latest national syllabi for ELT in China's HE to cultivate professionals of sound language proficiency, intercultural competence, creativity and the ability to solve problems (MoE 2000, 2004). The consequence is such that many of the language graduates fail to cope with work environments that demand interpersonal communication and international communication despite their language ability (Zhang 2006). Therefore, it can not be emphasised enough that an intercultural dimension in FLE in China should be implemented (Wang & Zhou 2006).

Although the Chinese term '跨文化(kua wenhua)' is not a new concept in China due to its long history of intercultural communication, ICC as a pedagogical goal in FL programs has only been recognized and developed since the early 80s (Hu 1999; Wang 2005). The obvious evidence is that there is no proper differentiation in Chinese translation between 'cross-cultural communication' and 'intercultural communication' in the FLE syllabus. Both use the same Chinese equivalence above (Shi 2006).

2.2.2 Pedagogical approaches

In language classes, traditionally both lexical-grammatical knowledge and cultural knowledge are learned largely by means of memorization, mainly from two authoritative sources: the teacher and the textbook (Cortazzi & Jin 1996; Gu 2006). However, the FLE circle seems to stick to the tradition of detaching culture content or nowadays intercultural

communication knowledge from language course books. This can be witnessed by the publishing history of a series of books. For example, in her review of the course books published between 1994 and 2004 available in online stores, Shi (2006: 31-32) discovered that half of them were written in Chinese, and that the books in English often promoted cultural stereotypes by teaching general cultural knowledge which was out of date. It was not until recently (e.g. see Xu 2004) did some authors venture to integrate intercultural communication into FL course materials. Therefore, Shi (2006) claims that course books might not be the best medium to deliver cultural knowledge in that the slow speed of publishing and updating of the materials often fail to reflect the dynamics of culture.

2.2.3 Traditional classroom instruction Vs Technology-mediated instruction

Characteristically ‘teacher-led, classroom-dependent and textbook-based’ (Gu 2002), FL teaching has been moving towards distance and online learning management systems. However, it is observed that many online programs still abide by the traditional teaching mode and are no better than a simple delivery of conventional materials via online platforms (Zhong & Shen 2002; Liu *et al.* 2003; Gu 2006). Even courses specialising in intercultural communication often fail to apply an interactive perspective, although this can be easily achieved by using existing Internet information and communication tools for cultural exploration and exchanges beyond the classroom. Such an endeavour needs the manipulation and articulation of pedagogically sound approaches as intercultural encounters and experiences are difficult to plan and stage in language classes in China due to institutional restrictions. As some scholars (e.g. Gu 2001; Wu 2001) acknowledge, for the foreseeable future no matter how substantial the change is, classrooms will still play a key role and textbooks will still be the central part of FL classes. On the whole, the current situation is making an on-going shift in China’s HE from teacher dominance to learner autonomy. Encouragingly, the trend is to create activities in real-life tasks, projects or case situations by using ICT.

2.2.4 Research on ICC development in FLE in China

Under such circumstances, research on developing learners' ICC in FL classes has attracted much attention in recent years. However, most research focuses on theoretical discussions instead of empirical ones (Hu 1999; Shi 2006). For example, there are discussions about the importance of intercultural language education, the set-up of ICC-oriented course syllabus for FL classes, and the necessity of raising learners' cultural knowledge and awareness in China (Hu 2003; Wang & Zhou 2005; Wang 2005). Qin (2005) conducted a small-scale survey research on college students' ICC based on intercultural adaptation theory, which does not apply to FL learners who are studying in China. There are some other empirical studies looking into project-based FL learning by using Internet tools. For instance, in her edited book, Gu and her colleagues from Suzhou University have undertaken a series of project-based learning studies including cross-country projects (Gu 2006) and find CALL-based collaborative learning is conducive to language learning (Xu & Warschauer 2004). Similarly, Zhang (2005) has completed a study of a collaborative writing project between Chinese university students and American students. She concludes that intercultural communication experience motivates learners in writing. However, research on ICC development in these studies was less focused. Adopting Byram's (1997) ICC model, Shi (2006) has recently designed a quasi-experimental study of investigating university students' perceptions, attitudes and problems in developing ICC via a web-based program. However, her conclusions are limited in that she did not take a complete vision of using Internet communication tools in her program.

So far, it has been identified that there is no clear picture of whether and how ICC-oriented programs with use of Internet technologies for developing learners' ICC emerge, let alone a collection of empirical studies in blended instruction (Belz & Thorne 2006). Therefore, this study tends to fill in the gap with a picture of ICC-oriented FL classes.

2.3 The pedagogical role of culture in FLE

2.3.1 Culture as content

The role of culture in a language course has been conceived differently. In courses that treat culture as background studies (see O'Dowd 2006), there has been a static view of seeing culture (Liddicoat 2004) in a generalized way, as if culture is a range of fixed cognitive, psychological and behavioural knowledge to be simply transmitted to learners. In addition, this factual transmission perspective adopts a monocultural approach which often excludes learners' home culture. Cross-cultural communication emerges from comparing aspects of communicative practices with distinct cultural groups (Piller 2007). While cultural differences are compared and contrasted, culture in each group is still seen as an invariant and uncontested matrix of meanings and practices. These notions of 'national' culture teaching are criticized as problematic in that a consequence of stereotyping is often created (Jordan 2002). In addition, as Macfadyen (2005 in Goodfellow & Hewling 2005) points out, there is no justification that individual members of national groups must necessarily exhibit the collective characteristics.

Drawing from a substantial literature review, Levy (2007:112) has categorized 5 qualities of culture concept, i.e. cultural as elemental, relative, group membership, individual (variable and multiple) and contested. In his view, deeply rooted in our own culture, we have to learn about the elements in order to have a better understanding of our 'frame of reference' and withhold our 'practical objectivity'. When interacting with other cultures, we should develop 'a more nuanced perspective' through direct and small-scale engagement so as to offset the biases from generalizations and contrastive approaches. He also distinguishes between collective and individual cultures. While the former aims at raising a sense of belonging to certain cultural groups, the latter values the individual's experiences and selections in how to represent their culture. He sees culture as contested at

many levels through verbal and non-verbal interactions for the purpose of ‘identifying points of contestation and managing differences’. While such a classification maps existing pedagogical projects of teaching culture with Internet technologies, he acknowledges that the categories may overlap (*ibid*: 105) and the culture concept should be seen holistic (*ibid*: 122). However, this synthesis still holds an essentialist view of taking culture, i.e., as contested, not negotiated. This point will be further discussed in the following section.

2.3.2 Culture as communication and discourse

In viewing culture as communication and discourse, Scollon and Scollon (2000, 2001 in Piller 2007) have observed three distinct ways of branding ‘Intercultural Communication’, namely, ‘cross-cultural communication’, ‘intercultural communication’ and ‘interdiscourse communication’. While ‘intercultural communication’ differs from ‘cross-cultural communication’ in that the former is of an interactional nature, both types of communication take the essentialist assumption of people belonging to or having a culture and ‘culture A’ in contact with ‘culture B’. In contrast with the first two categories, the third one avoids essentialist assumptions, insisting that any a priori notion of group membership be set aside (Scollon & Scollon *ibid.*) and it is linguistic and social practices that formulate culture and identity (Burr 2003 in Piller 2007). This view was initially influenced by social anthropology and ethnography, which deconstructs the collective culture into individual ones. The latest development of an ‘interdiscourse approach’ (Piller 2007) presents a fresh rationale for considering culture as a process of assertion, negotiation, construction, reflection, and the dynamics of interaction between individuals (Jordan 2002).

To sum up, it is suggested that a shift must be made from ‘reified and inescapable notions of cultural difference to a focus on discourses where culture is actually made relevant and used as a communicative resource’ (Piller 2007). It is this non-essentialist perspective that

requires one to achieve an ability to understand cultures as social constructs in the discourse of communication and to mediate between them. This ability is known as intercultural (communicative) competence (ICC/IC) which will be discussed in the following section.

2.3.3 From CC to ICC

The shift from seeing culture as content knowledge to a process of communication between different cultures to a process of negotiated dynamics of linguistic and social practices and identity influences the developing approaches to FLT. While the earlier cognitive approach stresses language proficiency, the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach promotes the notion of communicative competence (CC) developed by Hymes, Canale and Swain (see Byram 1997), which not only includes linguistic competence, but also sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic aspects. While CC prevails in European-American FLE (though not without being questioned), it has become problematic in contexts like China, owing to its nebulous and rarely attained ‘native speaker (NS)’ goal for FL learners. For instance, Byram (1997) questions the applicability of the NS goal imposed on FL learners and worries about the loss of their own cultural identities as a result of imitating the NS conventions in communication. Alptekin (2002: 57) comments that CC is ‘utopian, unrealistic and constraining’, referring to English as an international language, since social and cultural contexts vary from place to place. Many scholars argue that it is more important for FLT to be an intercultural than a communicative approach and for FL learners to develop the ‘intercultural speaker (IS)’ perspective (Thorne 2006; Byram 1997; Byram *et al.* 2002; Corbett 2003; Kramsch 1998), i.e. ‘the ability to interact effectively with people from cultures ... different from our own’ (Guilherme 2000: 297).

2.3.4 Models of IC and ICC

Byram (1997) has contributed a fully worked-out specification of intercultural competence (IC). He further distinguishes IC from ICC in that the former refers to the ability to communicate with members of other cultures in one's own language while the latter implies the same ability but using a foreign language (Byram 1997; O'Dowd 2006). Hence, ICC comprises an IC dimension in addition to the conventional CC dimensions in FLE. According to Byram (1997: 50-53), IC comprises five '*savoirs*': knowledge, attitudes, two sets of skills and critical cultural awareness. He argues that learners need both knowledge of their own and their interlocutor's country, and of the general process of societal and individual interactions. Besides, he believes that an attitude of 'curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own' is also essential in communication. In addition, he proposes that learners need the skills of interpreting and relating, and the skills of discovery and interaction to handle various cognitive and affective tasks to acquire intercultural competence. Ultimately, learners should be able to develop a critical mind towards perspectives, practices and products in their own and other cultures. This critical awareness is also interpreted as skills for reflection (Volet 2003). Taken together, this list of abilities forms the elements of an intercultural speaker, which is conducive to understanding and mediating between the home culture and the target culture (Kramsch 1993 in O'Dowd 2006).

However, there are two points that should be made clear with regard to Byram's approach. One is that he works with an intercultural, not an interdiscourse framework, so his work lends itself to being criticised on grounds of essentialism; the other is that he does not specify how these objectives are achieved in operation, given the various settings such as classroom, fieldwork and independent learning situations. In this regard, Liddicoat's (2004) process model of Intercultural Learning and Teaching (ILT) offers a complement in the

form of awareness-raising, skills development, production and feedback. Such a process seems more learner-centred and structured but lacking the specification of objectives that comprise IC/ICC development outcomes for teaching and assessment. Therefore, it is interesting to argue that the two models complement each other and provide a complete version of ICC development, which calls for an intercultural approach.

2.4 Internet for ICFL

2.4.1 Towards an intercultural approach

As Risager (1994: 11) acknowledges, '[the] Achilles' heel of foreign language teaching has always been the distance to the foreign culture.' While there can be small scale and short term projects of residence abroad for experiential learning, tandem learning or ethnographic study, most FL teaching instruction occurs in classrooms, adopting a cultural studies approach to '[reading] up knowledge of a country's culture' (Risager *ibid.*) or a cross-cultural contrastive approach for comparison and contrast. In one way or another, these approaches fail to centralize the intercultural-speaker goal in FLE. Even in subsequent years when a communicative approach prevailed to support authentic and meaningful tasks that sought to merge language and culture learning (Müller-Hartmann 2000), potential cultural exploration via interaction with texts gave way to information-gap tasks (Corbett 2003). An intercultural approach, however, 'assimilates some of the features of earlier approaches to culture in the communicative curriculum' by making it 'an integral part of the curriculum' (Corbett 2003: 30), in which linguistic development and intercultural understanding are equally important. Essentially, the intercultural approach takes both target and home culture into careful consideration, with respect to both 'cautious description and critical evaluation' (*ibid.* 19). Inclusive in nature, the intercultural approach can be strengthened in language classes by integrating Internet technologies. Following this argument, the next section will focus on the role of technology in FLE.

2.4.2 An integration of Internet technologies

Since the use of tape recorders in language labs in the 60s (Lafford & Lafford 1997) and hence the ever-increasing role of technology in FLE, teachers and researchers have exploited technological potential for every pedagogical aspect of FLE (Bush 1997). The Internet-mediated environment is seen as a cost-effective means for learners to be immersed in comprehensible input and output of meaningful interpersonal construction as a result of intercultural exploration and exchanges with online partners (Belz & Thorne 2006; Lee 1999; Liaw 2006).

Using the Web for information resources and reference tools, learners can get access to up-to-date cultural materials, which are considered authentic and which help to work on a level of cultural awareness most often acquired only through experience abroad (Lafford & Lafford 1997). These materials also make it easier for teachers to use as input for classroom activities to facilitate language learning without Internet connections. Moreover, unlike textbook materials, online materials can be updated much more frequently so that learners can gain the dynamic view of how culture is forming and reforming. In the meantime, computer-mediated communication (CMC) enables active participation in interaction and reflection with access to an authentic audience via the Internet, and the potential for the collaborative construction of knowledge in on-line interaction (Warschauer 1997). More importantly, as O'Dowd & Eberbach (2004) stress, CMC-based activities contribute particularly to the development of learners' ICC in that communicating with members of the target culture may enable learners to move from a fact-figure notion of culture towards an ethnographic understanding of culture involving products, practices and perspectives. Technically, CMC provides a number of affordances by producing a digital record of language transcripts that can be 'intensively studied after the fact' (Belz & Thorne 2006: xix).

Taking the Web-based and CMC-based facilities into account, there are two types of activities that students can perform: non-interactive and interactive. While non-interactive technologies serve as resources and reference tools for exploring language and culture input, interactive ones afford students opportunities to interact with distant partners in order to develop language proficiency and intercultural understanding. As such, the former activities usually consist of language learning tasks like online newspaper reading (Lee 1999; Liaw 2006) while the latter ones focus on language use tasks like videoconferencing and email communication (O'Dowd 2006). Overall, an integrated use of information and communication tools tends to encourage students to use the target language for intercultural learning, ranging from information searching to interpersonal communication.

2.4.2 A task-based approach to ICFLE

As mentioned earlier, the use of technology should be in line with pedagogical plans. While technology appears interesting and encouraging in class, learners will not benefit unless their teachers know how to apply technology in the instructional programs they devise (Bush 1997). Simply disseminating information on cultural products and practices to learners tends to revert to factual transmission method (Moore *et al.* 1998) and an ill-defined syllabus for online intercultural instruction does not help to meet learners' learning outcomes (O'Dowd & Eberbach 2004; O'Dowd 2006). Therefore, a carefully articulated intercultural curriculum involving the designing and implementing of tasks is of vital importance. As Corbett (2003) and Müller-Hartmann (2006) suggest, Nunan's (1989) framework for communicative task design can be adapted to serve intercultural ends.

As discussed before, the pedagogical goal of the tasks is clear and straightforward. In principle, it should engage a combination of intercultural understanding and language development. The input should involve information of cultural products, practices and perspectives from both the home and the target cultures. With an intercultural perspective

and purpose, a range of communicative activities can still be used in various settings. In technology-mediated settings, the pros and cons of Internet tools must be considered with realistic expectations before designing tasks.

Teachers' roles vary, including pedagogical, managerial, social and technical position (Müller-Hartmann 2006), all of which should serve to 'encourage the learner actively and systematically to seek cultural information' (Corbett 2003: 33), 'to gain fuller insights into native speakers' perspectives, values, and opinions associated with their products and practices' (Moore *et al.* 1998: 110). In particular, Corbett (2003) warns that in intercultural exchange tasks teachers should not hand over the 'expert and instructor' role to the distant partners. Rather, they should act as an integral part of the learning process, guiding them in creating and analyzing online interactions. In addition, they should take the role of maintaining rapport with the partner teacher. Meanwhile, learners should raise their awareness of skill-oriented intercultural exploration and exchanges with critical reflection. In his proposed four phases of intercultural meaning negotiation, Müller-Hartmann (2000) suggests that learners should firstly familiarize themselves with each other's cultural identities. Then they develop dialogues between partners and proceed to intensive negotiation of cultural values and norms. Finally they should learn to mediate between different perspectives. This process seems similar to Liddicoat's (2004) ILT model.

In summary, with the affordances of Internet technologies, there is no excuse to complain of lacking opportunity for authentic input and communication. Teachers should beware, as Byram *et al.*, (2001: 3) remark, that it is not their principle task to collect comprehensive information or to bring the foreign society into the classroom, but their responsibility to 'facilitate learners' interaction with some small part of another society and its cultures', to 'relativise their understanding of their own cultural values, beliefs and behaviours', and to encourage learners 'to investigate for themselves the otherness around them'.

Chapter 3 Methods of Data Collection

3.1 Research design

In this chapter I will outline the research design in terms of research questions, participants, techniques and ethical considerations.

3.1.1 Research questions

The research question I propose is: *What are the teachers' and learners' practices and perceptions of the current 'ecology' of FLE, especially in using Internet technologies (if any) for intercultural language teaching and learning activities, at the tertiary level in China?*

It covers two contexts: the conventional classroom setting and the one with network access (e.g. computer cluster). While the former is the predominant phenomenon, the latter has found its place to a certain extent (Gu 2002, 2006). The question can be broken down into sub-questions framed within a task-based perspective (Müller-Hartmann 2000), featuring goals, input, roles, actions, settings, outcome and feedback:

- How is ICC positioned in FLE at tertiary institutions?
- What are teachers' and learners' aims in foreign language classes?
- What materials or resources are used in designing intercultural activities?
- What tools, especially Internet tools (if any), do teachers use to engage learners in language class settings? Do learners use these differently outside the class?
- What are the current activities/tasks for intercultural language learning in the classroom, especially when using Internet tools?
- How are such learning processes and outcomes conceived and assessed?

While looking for information about behaviours and opinions, my goal is to mainly obtain quantitative data in order to describe the current FL classroom instructions and task designs for intercultural activities in a general way, in addition to acquiring some qualitative answers on specific occasions such as addressing the teachers' instructional plans and perceptions via emails. This decision is made due to the constraints of time and funding at a master degree level. It would be unviable to visit many universities and colleagues in China with such a short time available for conducting classroom observations or think-aloud protocols. Moreover, financial limitations also make it difficult to reach geographically-dispersed institutions. The advantages and disadvantages of possible methods are discussed in 3.1.3.

3.1.2 Identifying target participants

As made clear in the research questions, the target population for investigation comprises FL teachers and students of tertiary education in China. However, to approach this large and widespread population with a time constraint it is difficult to come up with a reasonable sample frame for probability sampling. Instead, I adopt the criterion of sample selection known as 'convenience' or 'opportunity' sampling (Dörnyei 2003: 72) by identifying those teachers who are engaged in intercultural teaching within an online FLE environment in China. This conduct ensures the relative ease of accessibility to participants with a clear purpose in relation to the investigation (Aiken 1997 in Dörnyei 2003). The teachers are both the potential respondents and the 'chains' that help to extend links to their students and colleagues. This snowball sampling technique is applied to complete the sample design.

However, the main disadvantage with this non-probability sampling is, from the viewpoint of population representation, not random, systematic (Gorard 2001), nor standardized

(Sapsford 2007). Gorard (2001) warns that non-probability sampling should be used only when there is no better alternative. Despite this bias, it is argued that non-probability samples are still useful. For example, Fowler (2002: 13) insists on the importance of evaluating the list 'to find out in detail how it was compiled, how and when additions and deletions are made, and the number and characteristics of people likely to be left off the list'.

3.1.3 Research tool

Concerning the nature of this research design, an Internet questionnaire survey is deemed to be a viable instrument of data collection. There are several benefits of this choice considering the potential participants. Firstly, a questionnaire survey is often seen as able to deliver a large amount of information quickly (Dörnyei 2003) and across great distances (Moore *et al* 1998). While it is almost impossible to visit all the institutions across China, the Internet facilitates access to participants 'across a complex matrix of university colleges and faculties' (Mann & Stewart 2000:5). Secondly, as Fowler (2002) suggests, when used as a self-administered instrument, an online questionnaire offers respondents sufficient time for careful thinking and checking answers. For the researcher, it reduces the wait for delivery and enables repeated contacts and reminders. Moreover, a questionnaire delivered via the Internet appears more user-friendly, making it easier for participants to return the answers, since the network supports high-speed, immediate returns. In addition, an online questionnaire survey lends itself easily to computerization and initial analysis (Dörnyei 2003; Fowler 2002). In terms of the cost, it is perhaps the cheapest of the various instruments (Fowler 2002).

However, there are drawbacks in using questionnaire survey. Dörnyei warns that the problem of respondent self-selection, i.e. volunteering, dropouts and freedom to choose to answer can reach a degree such that 'the resulting sample will not be similar to the

population' (2003: 75), thus, introducing a bias against any meaningful generalizability. Fowler (2002) is concerned that the possible low rate of response will make the sample less representative. Apart from the survey's inherent weakness such as obtaining superficial data, the data may be affected by respondents' carelessness or fatigue effect of screen reading, or reluctance to complete the questionnaire in such a distant mode (Dörnyei 2003).

In theory, as Mann and Stewart (2000) present, there are other online methods of collecting data. For example, by using Instant Messenger, synchronous interviews with remote participants can be automatically recorded in text or audio files. However, due to various practical constraints such as sample size, differences in time and work schedule, and in the use of diverse technologies on both sides, it is difficult to arrange effective Internet interviews on a proper agenda. Other options like online observations and document analysis seem more suitable for longitudinal studies rather than a survey. Moreover, there can be technological and political restrictions (Shi 2006) in online access. In the physical settings, face-to-face methods with ethnographic elements such as on-site interviews and observations in combination with case study are equally problematic. In such cases, although the research can obtain both quantitative and qualitative data for triangulation purposes and in-depth understanding of the data from the insider's perspective, practical concerns like negotiating entry to those participating institutions will add more complication, not to mention the daunting travel costs. Therefore, these alternative qualitative methods, while applicable to the research, are not considered useful in this case. Rather, they will be incorporated and developed for future research plans.

3.1.4 Questionnaire design

In order to collect data from teachers and learners about their respective experiences and perceptions of intercultural teaching and learning in class, two self-completed online questionnaires were developed (see Appendix B for paper versions). They were similar in

content and structure design so as to elicit comparable data on several aspects of instructional design of the teaching and testing of culture in classroom, especially in alliance with Internet technology mediation. The questions were structured with four-category Likert scales to encourage definite answers (Dörnyei 2003) whilst some factual questions were used to seek background information for classification purposes. The teacher's questionnaire was written in English since teachers all hold English language qualifications. As for students, since their language proficiency varies considerably, each question and instruction was provided with an equivalent Chinese translation so as to minimize misreading and errors of interpretation.

The questionnaire items followed Byram's ICC concept and Belz & Thorne's ICFLE framework, covering aspects of developing linguistic competence and intercultural competence, and Internet technology mediation. Referring to other existing questionnaires (e.g. Moore *et al* 1998; Shi 2006), the items were developed by reference to the kind of task-based approach (Müller-Hartmann 2000; Corbett 2003) that facilitates intercultural teaching and learning. In terms of items concerning technology, only the familiar and widely used ICTs in empirical literatures were included, excluding the recently-emerged ones (e.g. Facebook, Second Life) on the grounds that their educational application is still uncertain and under-explored. In a nutshell, the questionnaires were composed of questions about institutional policy, teaching/learning aims, input and tools, activities, teacher/learner roles, assessment and feedback. In addition, personal information like educational background teaching experience, the use of Internet, and comment also asked in a separate section.

In case of a low response rate, open questions for qualitative analysis were prepared for both teachers and students as a supplement. These looked into how they incorporate the resources and tools into their classroom teaching and learning tasks. The questions, if

necessary, would be sent via email to those who replied, in order to compensate for any shortfall in the quantity of data. Under such circumstances, as Fowler (2002: 10) acknowledges, ‘the goal of information gathering is not to generate statistics about a population but to describe a set of people in a more general way’.

3.2 Ethical issues

Regarding ethical issues, the major principles to all research concerning human beings apply to the online agenda despite limited conventions (Mann & Stewart 2000). Generally, based on the regulations from the Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee (HPMEC 2006) of the Open University, three main areas were taken into account: informed consent, confidentiality and protection.

Regardless of the type of research, it is a fundamental ethical consideration that respondents should be informed of what they are volunteering for (Fowler 2002) before a consent letter with signature is obtained. In the case of an Internet survey, though it is not feasible to obtain face-to-face signed forms, circulating emails containing a consent letter and placing this letter at the top of the questionnaire content are the alternatives. For security reasons, the OU email account was used to display the researcher’s official identity. Consent letters were approved by the Open University’s Ethics Committee and the version to students were translated in Chinese. They were both sent as email messages and uploaded via Survey Monkey (a commercial service provider, <http://www.surveymonkey.com/>) on the web pages that precede the questionnaires. When the participants agreed to take part in, they were instructed to click the ‘next’ button to indicate their consent.

Maintaining confidentiality is equally important (Dörnyei 2003; Fowler 2002). Unlike online participant observations which might face the dilemma of invasion of privacy (Mann & Stewart 2000), by using Internet surveys, from item answers to personal

information, all data were entered directly into a database which was password protected. This automation largely reduced the risk of revealing data collected by paper and audio-video tools. Concerning the potential sensitive cultural context in which Chinese participants were unwilling to reveal their real identity, it was suggested to them that they should use a nickname for contact. Although the questions under investigation are not considered sensitive in general, to avoid embarrassment of more direct instant messenger contacts or videoconferencing interviews, emailing between a researcher and participants is a way of addressing ethical considerations.

The third principle is to ensure that during and after participation in the research no harm should occur to participants and their lives should be free from any adverse consequence (*ibid.*). Teachers and students were assured that their participation had no effect on the assessments to their teaching and learning. Taking all the issues into consideration, this research design abides by the rules of Data Protection Act (1998) and the ethical framework developed by HPMEC (2006), and guidelines by BAAL (1994) and BERA (2004).

Chapter 4 Data collection and analysis

Having discussed the viable means of data collection in Chapter 3, this chapter will illustrate briefly the research procedures and analyse the data obtained from a combination of a pilot study and a main study, in which non-random convenience samples of FL teachers and their students at tertiary institutions in China were surveyed. It will conclude by addressing the limitations of this data collection and analysis.

4.1 The pilot study

The pilot study was conducted with two sets of people via the researcher's personal networking. The first group consisted of his current colleagues in language education contexts. The purpose was to check the construction of questionnaires in terms of length, language, and content. A trial completion of the questionnaires was undertaken at the participants' own pace. In reacting to the feedback, a major change was made by removing the open questions out of the questionnaires and instead giving them in a separate follow-on question sheet. They advised that reading the lengthy combination of quantitative and qualitative questions online would run the risk of losing participants. Other suggestions were made regarding the wording of the questionnaires and some content confusion was corrected subsequently.

It was followed by distributing the revised questionnaires to the researcher's previous colleagues who teach English language courses in Chinese universities. They were considered the target informants for this research survey and their participation at this stage might be useful in revealing some hidden problems previously ignored. In order to obtain responses as close to the formal survey as possible, this group was not informed of the 'piloting' purpose. Ten teachers were initially contacted to complete the teacher

questionnaire (TQ) online and each teacher was asked to find five voluntary students to test the student version (SQ). However, unexpectedly, a return record showed that all together 17 teachers and 23 students responded (but three teachers' and two students' responses were incomplete). Among the 14 teachers who completed the questionnaires, half of them were initially invited while the other half was recruited by some colleagues in the first half. This spontaneous snowball technique helped to reduce the bias of the researcher's personal influence to their responses. Since the numbers of participants in both groups were too small to operate a statistical examination of the questionnaires' internal consistency, an item analysis (Dörnyei 2003) method was used. However, a careful examination of the two group responses found that while students filled their questionnaires with no difficulty due to a Chinese translation to the instruction and question items, three teachers ignored the instruction when they were asked to continue with or skip over some questions (see the instruction between Item 8 and 9 in Appendix B). A subsequent check with them proved the error was made due to their carelessness. To avoid making the mistake again, it was decided to add a Chinese translation to highlight the instruction. Apart from this problem, all other instructions seemed clear and comprehensible to the participants.

4.2 The main study

As soon as the online questionnaires were updated with the finalized versions, formal invitation letters were circulated following a list of email contacts collected from several conferences on intercultural communication and FLE recently held in China. The list mainly consisted of two groups of conference participants, i.e., international presenters and local participants (FL teachers and postgraduates). In line with the research scope, the overseas members were removed from the list. Besides, in case some postgraduates might have graduated and become a teacher, an instruction was added to allow their self-categorization.

After the initial invitation, directions were distributed to those respondents with reference to research aims, questionnaire access, procedure, and requirements (Dörnyei 2003). URL links were included in the directions, leading to the TQ and SQ web sites, each with a participant consent letter at the initial page. They were asked to respond to questionnaire items by indicating on 4-point Likert-type scales the applicability of the given situations to their cases.

In addition to completing their own questionnaires, they were asked to involve their students and colleagues in participation. Once data elicitation was complete, there were 51 recorded teacher responses and 79 student responses in total, among which the full completion numbers were 39 in TQ and 59 in SQ respectively. Typically, the incomplete responses lacked the information of personal background (8 in TQ and 13 in SQ). A summary of the responses to both TQ and SQ is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 A summary of responses to TQ and SQ					
	Responses	Pilot Study	%	Main Study (including pilot study)	%
TQ	Incomplete	3	17.6	4+8	23.5
	Full	14	82.4	39	76.5
	<i>Total</i>	17	100	51	100
SQ	Incomplete	2	8.7	7+13	25.3
	Full	21	91.3	59	74.7
	<i>Total</i>	23	100	79	100

Such numbers of responses were rather small for running inferential analysis and inadequate to generate meaningful results that were applicable to the whole population. Rather, it could just offer some general perspectives over the target sample groups. To support a descriptive analysis of the limited quantity of data, semi-structured questions (Appendix C) were circulated to those teachers who reported having experience of using online methods for FL classes. However, only four of them returned the question sheets by email.

4.3 Research context

This section describes the informants, including their gender, teaching experience, educational background, and Internet use. As mentioned above, among the total records only 39 TQ and 59 SQ responses were complete with informants' personal information. Preliminary examination of the informant data revealed that responses came from 21 different institutes across mainland China, mostly in its southeast, northeast, southwest and central regions. This scattering of locations ensured a wide distribution of samples. A summary of these informants is displayed in Table 2.

Table 2 A summary of research informants with complete responses

		Teacher	%	Student	%
Gender	Male	13	33.3	17	28.8
	Female	26	66.7	42	71.2
Teaching years	< 2	5	12.8		
	2 – 6	9	23.1		
	> 6	25	64.1		
Class size	< 20	-	-		
	20 – 40	25	64.1		
	> 40	14	35.9		
Degree obtained/	BA/BSc	4	10.3	51	86.4
Target degree	MA/MSc	32	82.1	7	11.9
	PhD/EdD	3	7.7	1	1.7
Discipline	English major			41	69.5
	Non-English major			18	30.5
Internet age (years using the Internet)	< 2	2	5.1	7	11.9
	2 – 6	10	25.6	43	72.9
	> 6	27	69.2	9	15.3
Hours online per day	< 1	3	7.7	28	47.5
	1 – 3	23	59.0	24	40.7
	> 3	13	33.3	7	11.9
Where to go online	Home/Dorm	31	79.5	32	54.2
	Campus	7	17.9	17	28.8
	Internet Café	1	2.6	10	17.0
Total		39	100	59	100

In this study, the number of male informants in the teacher group accounted for one-third of the total while in the student group it was slightly over one-quarter. Both percentages reflected the real situation of male-female ratios of FL teachers and students in China, in which females significantly outnumber males. Within the teacher group, nearly two-thirds of the teachers had over 6 years of service. Thus, the proportion of long service experience somewhat increased the representation in teaching experience of the data (Moore *et al.* 1998), despite a relative small return. The same percentage applied to teachers who ran classes of a size between 20 and 40 students and the other one-third had more than 40 students in their classes, which is a normal phenomenon in tertiary institutions. While the majority of the teachers (82.1%) held a master level degree, most of the students (86.4%) were doing a bachelor's degree. According to the table, nearly 70 percent of the students majored in English language-related disciplines while the rest vary from accounting to engineering.

When it came to the use of Internet, up till the close of the survey (01 July, 2007), nearly 70 percent of the teachers reported that they had over 6 years' experience and about 85 percent of the students had a history of less than 6 years. In counting the average time online each day, teachers used the Internet frequently, about three-fifth of them spending between one and three hours and a remarkable one-third over 3 hours. By contrast, students recorded less time surfing the Net. Only about 10 percent exceeded three hours online per day. This is likely due to their heavy workload. When asked the usual place for network use, both teachers and students chose 'home/dormitory' by 79.5% and 54.2%. However, whereas only about one-fifth of the teachers reported using public access like campus or Internet café network, nearly half of the students did not own private access. This also partially explains why students spent less time online than teachers in average.

4.4 Data analysis of TQ and SQ

This section looks at the data from the teacher questionnaire and student questionnaire. In total 47 TQ and 72 SQ responses were examined since 8 out of 12 incomplete responses in TQ and 13 out of 20 in SQ (see Table 1 in Section 4.2) were still usable in providing information about the main investigated topics.

4.4.1 Descriptive analysis of TQ and SQ data

The first two items in TQ looked at the importance of ICFLE strategy and its outcome in institutions. It is clear from Table 3 that most of the teachers accepted that intercultural learning was an important aspect of FLE in their class (83%) and that it was also a specific outcome at their institutions (76.6%). On the students' part, they had a slightly lower perception (79.1%) of the importance of ICFLE.

Table 3 Institutional strategy of ICFLE						
Applicable	Importance of ICFLE (TQ1)	%	Outcome of ICFLE (TQ2)	%	Importance of ICFLE (SQ1)	%
Not	3	6.4	3	6.4	2	2.8
Rarely	5	10.6	8	17.0	13	18.1
Often	24	51.1	28	59.6	34	47.2
Always	15	31.9	8	17.0	23	31.9
Total	47	100	47	100	72	100

This general picture can be amplified by looking into the specific aims in language classes as given by both the teachers and students, which are displayed in Table 4 (next page). It can be seen that although the goals in FL classes varied, most teachers believed that all the listed items applied to their teaching aims. Generally, the linguistic competence (4 language skills plus vocabulary and grammar) seemed more important than intercultural competence (knowledge, attitudes, skills, and awareness). Specifically, among the linguistic skills, reading (95.7%) was the most focused aspect, followed by speaking (91.5%), listening (89.4%), vocabulary and grammar (87.2%), and writing (83%). In

comparison, the applicability of various IC items ranked between 70% and 86%. On the students' part, while the general trend of linguistic competence outweighing intercultural competence remained the same, the students valued those aims lower. Moreover, the students reduced the importance of learning vocabulary and grammar and saw writing as important an aim as speaking. Interestingly, in their aims to intercultural competence development, both teachers (29.7%) and students (37.5%) reported that 'knowledge of one's home culture' was 'not applicable' or 'rarely applicable'. Even the percentages of the combined 'often applicable' and 'always applicable' in the TQ and SQ are less than those of foreign cultures (TQ: 80.9%, SQ: 80.5%) by 10% and 18% respectively.

Table 4 Teachers' and students' aims in language classes

Teachers' aims (TQ3)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=47)
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
reading skills	2.1	2.1	40.4	55.3	95.7	3.49	100
writing skills	4.3	12.8	36.2	46.8	83.0	3.26	100
listening skills	2.1	8.5	42.6	46.8	87.4	3.34	100
speaking skills	6.4	2.1	36.2	55.3	91.5	3.40	100
vocabulary and grammar	6.4	6.4	40.4	46.8	87.2	3.28	100
knowledge of other cultures	4.3	14.9	44.7	36.2	80.9	3.13	100
knowledge of one's home culture	4.3	25.5	40.4	29.8	70.2	2.96	100
openness, tolerance & respect towards different cultures	2.1	12.8	46.8	38.3	85.1	3.21	100
intercultural communication skills	4.3	17.0	55.3	23.4	78.7	2.98	100
understanding of different cultural perspectives	4.3	14.9	51.1	29.8	80.9	3.06	100
Students' aims (SQ2)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=72)
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
reading skills	1.4	6.9	43.1	48.6	91.7	3.39	100
writing skills	-	13.9	54.2	31.9	86.1	3.18	100
listening skills	1.4	9.7	38.9	50.0	88.9	3.38	100
speaking skills	-	13.9	26.4	59.7	86.1	3.46	100
vocabulary and grammar	-	25.0	38.9	36.1	75.0	3.11	100
knowledge of other cultures	-	19.4	44.4	36.1	80.6	3.17	100
knowledge of one's home culture	4.2	33.3	44.4	18.1	62.5	2.76	100
openness, tolerance & respect towards different cultures	-	26.4	40.3	33.3	73.6	3.07	100
intercultural communication skills	-	25.0	41.7	33.3	75.0	3.08	100
understanding of different cultural perspectives	-	18.1	43.1	38.9	82.0	3.21	100

Table 5 summarizes the tools used by teachers and students in language classes. Figures from both parties confirmed that the textbook (both over 90%) was the most important tool whereas communication tools (both lower than 39%) were least used. While teachers and students agreed closely in using online materials (55.3% and 50%), they differed significantly in response to courseware supplement use.

Table 5 Tools used by teachers and students

Teachers' tools (TQ4)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=47)
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
textbook	2.1	4.3	42.6	51.1	93.7	3.43	100
courseware supplement	4.3	25.5	46.8	23.4	70.2	2.89	100
online materials	2.1	42.6	44.7	10.6	55.3	2.64	100
online communication tools	10.6	51.1	23.4	14.9	38.3	2.43	100
Students' tools (SQ3)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=72)
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
textbook	1.4	6.9	33.3	58.3	91.6	3.49	100
courseware supplement	-	43.1	41.7	15.3	57.0	2.72	100
online materials	11.1	38.9	36.1	13.9	50.0	2.53	100
online communication tools	22.2	40.3	27.8	9.7	9.7	2.25	100

From Table 6, it is clear that the textbook again played a predominant role in culture information input, followed by the teachers' direct or indirect experience. While nearly half of the teachers (46.9%) claimed using students' suggestions, only one-third of the students acknowledged it. Few teachers (12.8%) and students (9.7%) admitted negotiating with online partner classes for topics.

Table 6 Topic sources

Topic sources (TQ5)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=47)
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
textbook	2.1	2.1	61.7	34.0	95.7	3.28	100
my life experience	2.1	21.3	51.1	25.5	76.6	3.00	100
learners' suggestions	4.3	48.9	42.6	4.3	46.9	2.47	100
negotiation with online partners	46.8	40.4	6.4	6.4	12.8	1.72	100
Topic sources (SQ4)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=72)
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
textbook		15.3	44.4	40.3	84.7	3.25	100
teacher's experience	1.4	15.3	56.9	26.4	83.3	3.08	100
learners' suggestions	9.7	56.9	25.0	8.3	33.3	2.32	100
negotiation with online partners	50.0	40.3	6.9	2.8	9.7	1.63	100

Table 7 reflects the teachers’ and the students’ evaluation of the course materials. It can be seen that although the general comments were positive, students tended to have a lower opinion than teachers. Noticeably, nearly one-third of the students evaluated the materials as less satisfactory with reference to the criteria. However, the teachers (37%) had almost the same percentage as their students (37.5%) in terms of inadequate material coverage about their home culture.

Table 7 Profile of materials

Profile of materials (TQ6)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=47) Missing=1
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
up to date	-	17.4	71.7	10.9	82.6	2.93	100
informative	-	10.9	67.4	21.7	89.1	3.11	100
based on real life situations	-	21.7	67.4	10.9	78.3	2.89	100
over-generalize the target culture	2.2	26.1	60.9	10.9	71.8	2.80	100
cover one’s home culture	2.2	34.8	54.3	8.7	63.0	2.70	100
unbiased towards either culture	6.5	10.9	63.0	19.6	82.6	2.96	100

Profile of materials (SQ5)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=72)
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
up to date	4.2	27.8	51.4	16.7	68.1	2.81	100
informative	1.4	29.2	47.2	22.2	69.4	2.90	100
based on real life situations	2.8	27.8	50.0	19.4	69.4	2.86	100
over-generalize the target culture	1.4	30.6	59.7	8.3	68.0	2.75	100
cover one’s home culture	6.9	30.6	41.7	20.8	62.5	2.76	100
unbiased towards either culture	5.6	29.2	43.1	22.2	65.3	2.82	100

When asked the priorities of FL classes (Table 8, next page), the teachers were more inclined to select the integration of language and culture in instruction. They also gave a priority to using Internet information tools (82.3%) as a means of accessing information. On the other hand, the students seemed more interested in learning cultural knowledge from both textbooks (78.8%) and their teachers’ experience (77.4%). One point worth noting on both parties is that despite the least prioritized position, still slightly more than half of the respondents indicated using Internet communication tools for FL classes.

Table 8 Priorities of FL classes

Priorities of FL classes (TQ7)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=47) Missing=2
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
deal with language as a linguistic system	-	11.1	68.9	20.0	88.9	3.09	100
teach the relationship between language and culture	-	6.7	55.6	37.8	93.4	3.31	100
integrate the target culture into instruction	-	6.7	75.6	17.8	93.4	3.11	100
use multimedia resources	-	26.7	42.2	31.1	73.3	3.04	100
use Internet information tools	-	17.8	55.6	26.7	82.3	3.09	100
use Internet communication tools	4.4	44.4	37.8	13.3	51.1	2.60	100
Priorities of FL classes (SQ6)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=72) Missing=1
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
learn language as a linguistic system	11.3	19.7	45.1	23.9	69.0	2.82	100
learn the relationship between language and culture	4.2	22.5	47.9	25.4	73.3	2.94	100
learn cultural knowledge from textbook	1.4	19.7	57.7	21.1	78.8	2.99	100
learn cultural knowledge from teachers	1.4	21.1	56.3	21.1	77.4	2.97	100
use multimedia resources	5.6	26.8	42.3	25.4	67.7	2.87	100
use Internet information tools	2.8	26.8	46.5	23.9	70.4	2.92	100
use Internet communication tools	2.8	42.3	33.8	21.1	54.9	2.73	100

Table 9 (next page) examines how FL classes were undertaken in terms of teaching style. The data from both TQ and SQ clearly demonstrate the traditional classroom teaching style, i.e. teacher’s presentation (TQ: 91.1%, SQ: 95.8%) in classes involving learner activities, which left little space for carrying out online activities in whichever context. However, in spite of the conventional teaching style, there are some cases that were reported as applying online technologies in FL classrooms. This conclusion can also be evidenced from the responses to the self-selection item of online FLT experience (see instructions with ‘*’ in Appendix B). According to the data, three-fifths of the teachers (n=47) and students (n=72) recorded themselves as having online FLT experience, though not necessarily for long-term plans.

Table 9 Teaching styles in FL classes

Teaching styles in FL classes (TQ8)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=47) Missing=2
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
teacher presentation	4.4	4.4	51.1	40.0	91.1	3.27	100
individual learner activities	2.2	13.3	60.0	24.4	84.4	3.07	100
collective learner activities	2.2	8.9	66.7	22.2	88.9	3.09	100
online activities within class	44.4	42.2	8.9	4.4	13.3	1.73	100
online activities with distance classes	55.6	28.9	8.9	6.7	15.6	1.67	100
online learning system without partner classes	51.1	31.1	8.9	8.9	17.8	1.76	100
Teaching styles in FL classes (SQ7)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=72) Missing=1
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
teacher presentation	-	4.2	45.1	50.7	95.8	3.46	100
individual learner activities	1.4	29.6	54.9	14.1	69.0	2.82	100
collective learner activities	1.4	43.7	38.0	16.9	54.9	2.70	100
online activities within class	49.3	35.2	15.5	-	15.5	1.66	100
online activities with distance classes	59.2	25.4	12.7	2.8	15.5	1.59	100
online learning system without partner classes	63.4	23.9	7.0	5.6	12.6	1.55	100

The following descriptive analyses focus on those informants with online FLT experience with regard to different uses of Internet tools for various activities.

Table 10 (next page) explores the applicability of common Internet tools in language classes, ranging from information tools to communication tools. It can be found that both the teachers and the students confirmed that use of information tools (like search engines, reference tools and text-based web pages) were more applicable than were communication tools. This tendency suggests that information tools were often used for language learning and information searching activities such as using online dictionaries and reading online newspapers. However, email, the popular asynchronous communication tool, seemed to be used more by the teachers (60.7%) than by the students (35.5%).

Table 10 Use of Internet tools for activity design

Use of Internet tools (TQ9)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=47)/Missing
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
browsers and search engines	17.9	10.7	50.0	21.4	71.4	2.75	100/19
online reference tools	14.3	21.4	53.6	10.7	54.3	2.61	100/19
text-based web pages	14.3	32.1	35.7	17.9	53.6	2.57	100/19
email	14.3	25.0	39.3	21.4	60.7	2.68	100/19
e-forum	35.7	35.7	14.3	14.3	28.6	2.07	100/19
blog	42.3	23.1	23.1	11.5	34.6	2.04	100/21
chat-room	32.1	28.6	21.4	17.9	39.3	2.25	100/19
instant messenger	30.8	38.5	15.4	15.4	30.8	2.15	100/21
videoconferencing	46.4	28.6	14.3	10.7	25.0	1.89	100/19
Use of Internet tools (SQ8)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=72)/Missing
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
browsers and search engines	8.7	19.6	43.5	28.3	71.8	2.91	100/26
online reference tools	11.1	31.1	40.0	17.8	57.8	2.64	100/27
text-based web pages	6.5	26.1	58.7	8.7	63.4	2.70	100/26
email	17.8	46.7	24.4	11.1	35.5	2.29	100/27
e-forum	31.1	37.8	24.4	6.7	31.1	2.07	100/27
blog	41.3	32.6	21.7	4.3	26.0	1.89	100/26
chat-room	37.0	32.6	26.1	4.3	30.4	1.98	100/26
instant messenger	42.2	37.8	17.8	2.2	20.0	1.80	100/27
videoconferencing	65.2	23.9	6.5	4.3	10.8	1.50	100/26

Following Table 10, Table 11 (next page) explores the possibilities of activity design by deploying these information and communication tools mentioned. The listed activities are the representative examples identified in the existing literatures. In addition to the possible activities in class (SQ9), the students were also asked about what they did with these tools in their self-study time (SQ10). Similar to the data analysis in Table 10, both the teachers and the students attached much importance to activities using information tools, particularly, information searching and browsing (TQ10: 67.8%, SQ9: 57.8%, SQ10: 69.1%), and accessing audio files to practise listening (TQ10: 60.8%, SQ9: 64.5%, SQ10: 57.1%). While the teachers had a relatively low opinion of using online reference tools for vocabulary and grammatical activities (42.9%), the students showed this as their preference (46.7%), especially in their self-study time (57.1%). With regard to the activities based on communication tools, both the teachers and the students had a generally negative attitude. While two-fifths and one-fourth of the teachers respectively advocated writing emails and videoconferencing with partner classes, the percentages of agreement

Table 11 Activities of using Internet tools

Activities of using Internet tools (TQ10)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=47) Missing
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
online reference tools for lexical learning	10.7	46.4	25.0	17.9	42.9	2.50	100/19
browsing & searching information on topics	-	32.1	46.4	21.4	67.8	2.89	100/19
access audio materials	25.0	14.3	42.9	17.9	60.8	2.54	100/19
writing emails to partners	22.2	29.6	29.6	18.5	48.1	2.44	100/20
forum discussion within class	37.0	37.0	18.5	7.4	25.9	1.96	100/20
forum discussion with partners	42.9	39.3	7.1	10.7	17.8	1.86	100/19
chat with partners	28.6	35.7	28.6	7.1	35.7	2.14	100/19
videoconference with partners	42.9	32.1	14.3	10.7	25.0	1.93	100/19
web page or blog for sharing ideas	25.0	42.9	21.4	10.7	32.1	2.18	100/19
Activities of using Internet tools in class (SQ9)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=72) Missing
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
online reference tools for lexical learning	17.8	35.6	37.8	8.9	46.7	2.38	100/27
browsing & searching information on topics	15.6	26.7	46.7	11.1	57.8	2.53	100/27
access audio materials	13.3	22.2	48.9	15.6	64.5	2.67	100/27
writing emails to partners	40.0	35.6	24.4	-	24.4	1.84	100/27
forum discussion within class	29.5	45.5	18.2	6.8	25.0	2.02	100/28
forum discussion with partners	42.5	37.5	17.5	2.5	20.0	1.80	100/32
chat with partners	42.2	28.9	24.4	4.4	28.8	1.91	100/27
videoconference with partners	60.0	28.9	11.1	-	11.1	1.51	100/27
web page or blog for sharing ideas	37.8	35.6	24.4	2.2	26.6	1.91	100/27
Activities of using Internet tools after class (SQ10)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=72) Missing
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
online reference tools for lexical learning	11.9	31.0	38.1	19.0	57.1	2.64	100/30
browsing & searching information on topics	7.1	23.8	40.5	28.6	69.1	2.90	100/30
access audio materials	7.1	35.7	33.3	23.8	57.1	2.74	100/30
writing emails to partner class	40.5	31.0	21.4	7.1	28.5	1.95	100/30
forum discussion within class	38.1	40.5	16.7	4.8	21.5	1.88	100/30
forum discussion with partners	45.2	42.9	9.5	2.4	11.9	1.69	100/30
chat with partners	28.6	38.1	28.6	4.8	33.4	2.10	100/30
videoconference with partners	58.5	29.3	9.8	2.4	12.2	1.56	100/31
web page or blog for sharing ideas	41.5	24.4	29.3	4.9	34.2	1.98	100/31

from the students were actually about 15% lower. Nevertheless, still slightly over one-third of the teachers and the students (SQ10) supported chatting activities. Generally speaking, although activities involving Internet tools were reported in use for FL classes, the applications were mainly focused on information tools.

Table 12 investigates the possible barriers that language classes might come across in developing and implementing activities.

Table 12 Main barriers								
Main (TQ11)	barriers	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=47)/Missing
		Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
	funding	7.7	15.4	26.9	50.0	76.9	3.19	100/21
	access to network	15.4	19.2	46.2	19.2	65.4	2.69	100/21
	time in class	11.5	15.4	57.7	15.4	73.1	2.77	100/21
	time outside class for preparation	3.8	19.2	61.5	15.4	76.9	2.88	100/21
	technical support	3.8	11.5	53.8	30.8	84.6	3.12	100/21
	pedagogical experience	7.7	46.2	38.5	7.7	46.2	2.46	100/21
	participation by the students	11.5	46.2	26.9	15.4	22.3	2.46	100/21
Main (SQ11)	barriers	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=72)/Missing
		Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
	teacher instruction	8.9	33.3	44.4	13.3	57.7	2.62	100/27
	access to network	15.6	28.9	35.6	20.0	55.6	2.60	100/27
	time in class	8.9	31.1	42.2	17.8	60.0	2.69	100/27
	time outside class for preparation	17.8	35.6	24.4	22.2	46.6	2.51	100/27
	technical support	6.7	24.4	37.8	31.1	68.9	2.93	100/27
	participation by the students	15.6	11.1	60.0	13.3	73.3	2.71	100/27

According to Table 12, perspectives from the teachers and the students differed significantly. Whereas the former ranked lacking technical support (84.6%) on the top of the list and students’ participation (including partner class) on the bottom, the latter thought the absence of their classmates and distance partners in online activities (73.3%) was the biggest problem, followed by insufficient technical support (68.9%). The teachers also considered timing an important problem both in and out of class (73.1% and 76.9%). Interestingly, whilst less than half of the teachers (46.2%) believed their pedagogical experience as a constraint, nearly three-fifths of the students (57.7%) were not confident

about their teachers' instruction. One thing in common is that both sides admitted inadequate access to the network was also an obstacle towards undertaking activities based on Internet technologies.

Table 13 Teachers' and students' views of using Internet tools for FL classes

Views (TQ12)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=47) Missing
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
enhance language proficiency	-	19.0	47.6	33.3	80.9	3.14	100/5
enable real language use	-	9.5	61.9	28.6	90.5	3.19	100/5
enrich cultural knowledge	2.4	2.4	57.1	38.1	95.2	3.31	100/5
foster skills in intercultural communication	-	4.8	66.7	28.6	95.3	3.24	100/5
enhance intercultural understanding	2.4	2.4	59.5	35.7	95.2	3.29	100/5
as important as classroom teaching	-	19.0	59.5	21.4	80.9	3.02	100/5
more interesting than classroom teaching	-	21.4	57.1	21.4	78.5	3.00	100/5
allow great flexibility in teaching/learning	2.4	7.1	57.1	33.3	90.4	3.21	100/5
encourage active learning	-	7.1	57.1	35.7	92.8	3.29	100/5
Views (SQ12)	Applicability in percentage (%)				Often + Always	Mean	Total (n=72) Missing
	Not	Rarely	Often	Always			
enhance language proficiency	2.9	15.7	57.1	24.3	81.4	3.03	100/2
enable real language use	2.9	18.6	51.4	27.1	78.5	3.03	100/2
enrich cultural knowledge	2.9	7.1	54.3	35.7	90.0	3.23	100/2
foster skills in intercultural communication	4.3	10.0	52.9	32.9	85.8	3.14	100/2
enhance intercultural understanding	2.9	10.0	55.7	31.4	87.1	3.16	100/2
as important as classroom teaching	4.3	18.6	54.3	22.9	77.2	2.96	100/2
more interesting than classroom teaching	5.7	15.7	41.4	37.1	78.5	3.10	100/2
allow great flexibility in teaching/learning	5.7	5.7	52.9	35.7	88.6	3.19	100/2
encourage active learning	4.3	12.9	48.6	34.3	82.9	3.13	100/2

Regardless of the various difficulties, their views (Table 13) on employing Internet tools for FL classes appeared positive in terms of language learning/use, IC development, comparison between technology-mediated instruction and traditional classroom instruction. Similarly, both parties tended to view Internet-mediated FL activities as more applicable in the development of intercultural competence than linguistic competence. Interestingly,

only 78.5 percent of the students agreed that Internet-mediated instructions enabled real language use, much lower than that of the teachers' perceptions in percentage terms (90.5%). On the other hand, comparing the technology-mediated instruction with the traditional classroom one, over three quarters of the teachers and the students held the view that the former was as important as the latter, but more interesting. In addition, over four-fifths of the teachers and the students supported the claims that instruction with technology mediation allowed great flexibility in teaching/learning and encouraged active learning.

FL assessment is another useful factor to be reviewed. In Table 14 it can be seen that among the various methods, while some identical items had close percentages, the others were inconsistent across the two groups. It should be noted that this section in the questionnaires was presented in the form of multiple choice, which allowed informants to choose more than one answer as well as to fill in with open answers not included in the list. Clearly, the teachers and the students showed agreement in written forms of assessment, including written test, written assignments/reports and learning diary, the former two of which were widely adopted whilst the latter least of all. A surprising contrast lies in the choices of oral presentation. The teachers' ranking (83%) sharply contradicted that of the students (23.6%). There were also 70.2% and 68.1% of the teachers claiming the use of student portfolio and observation means in assessment whereas the percentages from the students were only 54.2% and 47.2%. Interviews, on the other hand, were not popular.

Table 14 Assessment of intercultural foreign language teaching and learning

Assessment	TQ13 (N = 47)	%	SQ13 (N = 72)	%
student portfolio	33	70.2	39	54.2
interviews with learners	18	38.3	19	26.4
observation of language use	32	68.1	34	47.2
learning diary	8	17.0	14	19.4
oral presentation	39	83.0	17	23.6
written test	36	76.6	54	75.0
research reports/written assignments	28	59.6	44	61.1

4.4.2 Data from the follow-up question sheet

A follow-up Word sheet containing semi-structured questions was used to elicit information on several aspects of reported examples of blended instruction with Internet mediation. The teachers were asked to reveal details about their regular designs for intercultural activities regarding course context, activity design, exemplar plan, purpose, benefits and problems, and expectations for future plans. 19 teachers who self-reported on online FLE experience and provided valid email addresses were contacted to answer follow-up questions. However, only four replied. The low return was largely due to the start of summer holidays. Even the four respondents did not all elaborate on their answers.

Informants X, D, and Y were all teaching general English to students of various disciplines except English language-related ones while Informant S taught professional courses (writing and linguistics) to English undergraduates and postgraduates. Coincidentally, the former three either used search tools for reading materials or audio-video resources for cultural information input.

In Informant X's account, it is not clear whether she engaged her students in searching activities. Informant D mentioned briefly his way of using online audio-video and graphic materials to motivate his students in role-play or brainstorming activities. One problem he came across was that sometimes non-verbal messages delivered in films were incomprehensible for students, even after viewing many times. There appeared no more attempts made to solve the difficulty.

Informant Y demonstrated his instructional design by actively involving the students in information searching activity with various theme-focused topics. Here is the quote from his description:

When dealing with the theme 'Women, Half the Sky', I assigned my students to surf the Net for the following information: 'half the sky' versus feminism, the right to vote both for the Chinese women and for their western counterparts, equal pay for equal work and sex discrimination in China and the west. The above-mentioned information is to be discussed in class. The second activity is to watch on line 'Desperate Housewives'. And the latter is optional.

[Informant Y]

Although such an instructional plan is clear and not complex in operation, the students were instructed to use search engines for themed information, the purpose being to gain cross-cultural understandings of "Mao's 'half the sky' and feminism" and to reflect critically on the issue in Chinese culture – in Y's words, to understand 'problems still exist, say, sex discrimination in China especially'. By contrast, Informant S reported only requesting his students to discuss with interlocutors via e-forum and listserv cross-linguistic and cross-cultural issues, without details about instructional plans.

Regardless of the varied practices in the four cases (Table 15), the teachers agreed that technology-mediated instruction was beneficial as it is motivating, resourceful and communicative. However, they commented that time-consuming, great demands on pedagogical guidance and technical support were the main challenges. Little evidence can be drawn from the limited qualitative data that demonstrate the use of the Internet as a channel for communication or output. It seems that Internet used as an input for culture resources is more a way to reinforce teachers' instruction than of engaging learners' active participation. However, the real motives in both these cases remain to be explored.

Table 15 Informants' answers to the follow-up questions

	Informant X	Informant D	Informant Y	Informant S
Course context	College English for non-English majors (incl. L, S, R & W)	College English for non-English majors (incl. L, S, R & W)	College English for non-English majors (including L, S, R & W)	1) Writing for English undergraduates; 2) General Linguistics for postgraduates
Activity design	Information searching	Using online audio-video & graphic materials	Information searching; emailing; listening to online programs; using online audio-video materials	1) Writing: online discussion; 2) Linguistics: listserv discussion
Exemplar plan	1) student need analysis; 2) searching & downloading materials; 3) planning for pre-task	1) watching films & animated pictures; 2) role-play & brainstorming	1) theme-based information searching; 2) class discussion 3) watching online film	1) assigning students into online groups with distance partners; 2) requiring students to join in discussion panels via listserv for cross-linguistic and cross-cultural issues
Purpose		1) to train students' pronunciation 2) to improve communication skills	1) to gain cross-cultural understanding of different values 2) to reflect the home culture	1) to enhance cross-cultural awareness 2) to promote motivation for writing 3) to foster communication skills 4) to improve linguistic competence
Ups & downs	Students were not cooperative	difficult to maintain interest, to understand non-verbal messages; lack of materials and time	most students followed the instruction but a few did not, saying no easy access to the net	1) receiving students' welcome; 2) time-consuming; 3) need institutional support
Actions to take	Taking every student's need into account in activity design	1) more technological aids; 2) a platform for resource sharing and idea exchanging	1) more technological guidance; 2) allowing easy access to the net 3) motivating students	Put General Linguistics course online

4.5 Problems of data collection and analysis

In reviewing the methodology of this survey study, the researcher is aware of the pitfalls created by the process of data collection, which in turn affected data analysis. Inherently, many surveys suffer from the problems of lack of detail (Levy & Stockwell 2006; Dörnyei 2003) and the gap between what informants say they do and what they really do. Problems may arise when the participants think the survey questionnaires are vague and less specific, which may cause biases in the recorded responses which differ from the real events to the participants.

With reference to accessing participants, the researcher used convenience samples from conference participants in China. While the targeted groups were of relevance to this research focus, the formation of the samples might bring about a bias. Generally speaking, in China large numbers of teachers often do not have opportunities for presenting at domestic conferences because of various reasons such as heavy workloads, institutional policy, insufficient budget, geographic distance and so forth. Most of the conference presenters are actually established professionals and backbones of the participating institutions. This circle often excludes the large population of average teachers. Therefore, a snowball technique was used subsequent to the convenience sampling, in the hope of involving those potential informants who might not have the opportunities for conference presentation but might have the same research interest in and teaching experience of intercultural language teaching.

There are also technical and practical difficulties. Technically, due to an unexpected server upgrading by the commercial provider (Survey Monkey), some participants may have experienced a block-out, although the researcher kept them informed of the temporary break-down in time. More seriously, the Chinese translation in the SQ old version could

not be displayed in the new interface, which gave the researcher extra pressure in restoring it. Practically, when distributing questionnaires, unlike the face-to-face means, the online method did not guarantee an ensured return. It took the researcher a much longer time than expected to access volunteers, to chase up returns and to recruit more volunteers in order to compensate for the drop-outs during the course. Originally, an instruction required the teachers to send the researcher a copy when they forwarded the invitation to their colleagues. In reality, none made the effort. Therefore, it was impossible to calculate the return rate due to the snowball technique. To increase it, follow-up reminders were sent in order to maintain their participation (Gorard, 2001; Dörnyei, 2003). In addition, another two groups of conference members were identified and their emails added to the list. However, the number of responses did not rise considerably, compared with the increase in the total number of enlisted members.

In data analysis, arguably, this study is limited in terms of the sample numbers. As discussed above, without a reasonable amount of data, it became almost meaningless to run any inferential analysis. Rather, descriptive analysis was used, with low confidence in its validity and reliability. This drawback, therefore, to a large degree, impedes data interpretation, and subsequently, valuable findings.

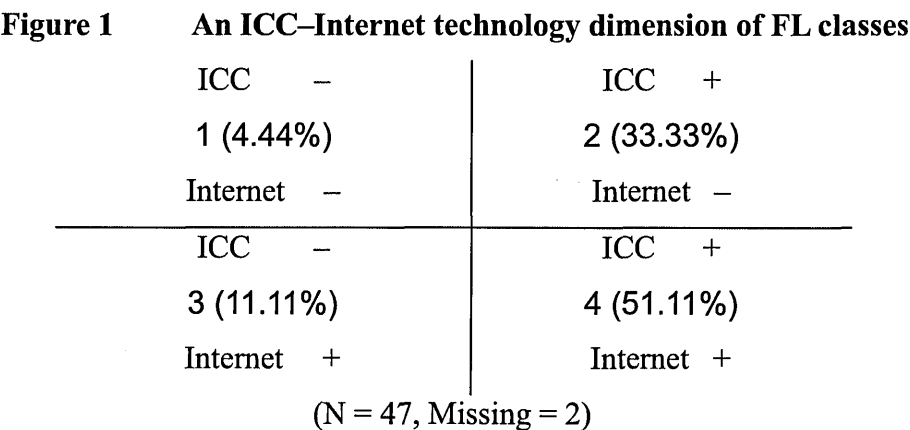
In view of the limitations in the research design, a more substantial research project in future would, however, be necessary if reliable and valid lessons were to be drawn. As mentioned in Chapter 3, in order to achieving convincing and comprehensible results, longitudinal research design with qualitative elements such as interviews, observations and case study should be applied to future research project.

Chapter 5 Interpreting the data

In Chapter 4, the survey data, including the data from quantitative questionnaires and from the follow-up question sheet, were analysed and reported. This chapter aims to interpret the data in relation to the research questions addressed in Chapter 3. Specifically, by defining two matrices to accommodate the range of data, it attempts to describe the teachers’ and students’ perceptions of institutional emphasis on ICC development, their expectations of FL classes, their views of the materials or resources for classroom activities, whether they make use of available Internet technologies for intercultural learning activities, how they incorporate the use of these facilities into these activities, and how they conceive and assess these activities.

5.1 A review of the research questions’ dimensions

The main research question looks into the teachers’ and students’ perceptions of and practices in the current contexts of China’s FLE, especially in using Internet technologies for intercultural language teaching and learning activities. This question proposes two layers – the broad one for an overview of FLE context and the specific one for technology mediation. Thus two matrices can be used to accommodate the data belonging to different contexts. The first matrix looks at the relationship between developing ICC as an institutional strategy and the use of Internet technologies, as illustrated by Figure 1 below:



For the sake of better institutional representation, only teachers’ data was used since the teachers’ participation in this survey did not necessarily involve in their students’ participation. An overall categorization of the data suggests that it can be classified into four cells. Cell 1 refers to a classroom context in which neither ICC development is established as a major goal in FL class instruction nor Internet technologies are used in the course of language teaching and learning. This context only accounts for less than 5 percent of the investigated teachers. The second cell shows that ICC as pedagogical goal has been set up among one-third of the institutions investigated but the realization of this aim still falls in the traditional setting as in Cell 1. Cell 3 shows that in some language classes, while ICC is not placed in an important position (which suggests a focus on language skills), Internet tools or resources are utilised (11.11%) for teaching and learning purposes. Cell 4 demonstrates an established ICC goal in FL classrooms with an incorporation of Internet technologies, which takes place among slightly over half of the investigated institutions.

With regard to the different use of Internet technologies in intercultural language class settings, Figure 2 presents the following matrix:

Figure 2 An Internet IT–CT dimension in intercultural activities

Information Tools +	Information Tools –
1	2
Communication Tools –	Communication Tools +
0	3
	Communication Tools +

Firstly, this matrix can be seen as specified from Cell 4 in Figure 1 (ICC +, Internet +), which means that Internet technologies are used for ICC development. However, in Figure 2, due to the various items for examining information and communication tools, it is unlikely to come up with general percentages of each contextual cell. Sub-cell 0 (‘sub-cell’

is used to distinguish cells from Figure 1) means no Internet tools are used for ICC development and it will not be considered in this matrix. In Sub-cell 1 teachers tend to enhance their lectures by using information tools such as web pages, reference tools, and search engines to find, browse and download learning materials (audio-video, graphic and text) and provide them to learners either for in-class activities or after-class use. This web-enhanced process of exposure and exploration is more facilitative to language learning. Sub-cell 2 shows that teachers use synchronous and asynchronous communication tools to engage learners in language activities, which is CMC-based. In this dimension, synchronous activities are mostly undertaken in class and asynchronous ones can be done at learners' own pace in their self-study time. Each way, teachers have to adjust their roles to a facilitator and supporter. However, using communication technologies alone may largely focus on language use in intercultural communication rather than language learning. Sub-cell 3 represents the integrative use of both Internet information and communication tools, which supports accessing/processing learning resources for intercultural exploration and undertaking collaborative activities for intercultural communication. On the whole, although these two matrices use simplified dimensions to measure complex situations, they can offer some clear frames for interpreting the data.

5.2 Discussing the data

5.2.1 The position of institutional strategy towards the intercultural goal

As discussed in Chapter 2, the new national syllabi of ELT for English majors and non-English majors (MoE 2000, 2004) at tertiary institutions have highlighted the importance of enhancing their intercultural sensitivity, tolerance and flexibility in mediating between different cultures in addition to the accurate use of language. This demands a shift from the traditional teaching approaches to an intercultural approach (Corbett 2003). From the questionnaire data (Table 3), it can be concluded that the importance of establishing an

intercultural dimension has been promoted in most institutional strategic agendas since it is recognized by the teachers and students investigated. However, the data shows that both the teachers and students scored somewhat lower in answering to which degree the outcome in intercultural learning was considered. This means that the goal of ICFLE has not been fully implemented across the institutions. While the principle of ICFLE is easy to set up, it is problematic to realise the goal with practical guidelines in the process of implementation and outcome evaluation.

5.2.2 The teachers' and learners' aims in FL classes

The realization of the institutional strategy also relies on the teachers' and the students' aims in FL classes. If the specific aims match the hierarchy of the institutional objectives, the institutional policy will be realized. According to the informants in this study (Table 4 & 8), despite the intention of balancing language component with culture component, there is still a prevalence of focusing on linguistic competence, especially on reading skills. Notably, while developing ICC has become a goal among the teachers and the students to a certain extent, there remains a trend of learning about the target culture outweighing that of the home culture.

5.2.3 The materials and resources as input

The survey confirms that the textbook is the most important instructional tool used as language and culture input in classes. Teachers, on the one hand, continue to 'rely on textbooks as the main source of cultural information in which students learn about the target cultures simply from reading cultural notes' (Moore 1996 in Moore et al. 1998: 110); on the other, they employ Internet information tools to access authentic and up-to-date information for classroom activity use. Additionally, they serve as an important resource as language and cultural informants to students. Such practices are still teacher-led and textbook-dependent (Gu 2002), which suits the knowledge transmission method in

classroom teaching. This suggests that the traditional essentialist view of culture, i.e. seeing culture as a list of static facts and practices (Liddicoat 2004; Piller 2007), still plays an important role in language classes. Moreover, although knowledge is an essential element in linguistic and intercultural competence development, it can never replace affective and behavioural factors. The data also implies that despite the availability of Internet tools, especially communication tools, they are far from being effectively utilized for the pedagogical purposes in China's FLE. It is not surprising to see that knowledge about the target culture is often seen as over-generalized (Table 7) by using resources obtained via information technologies rather than communication technologies at an individual level.

5.2.4 The Internet tools in use, the activities and teaching styles

Despite the predominance of teacher presentation and conventional classroom activities, there are cases using online tools for FL classroom activities (Table 9, Section 4.4.3). However, as noted earlier, most of the technology-mediated activities are based on simple use of information tools (information tool +, communication tool – in Figure 2) to search materials as additional cultural notes. Thus, there can be a potential danger of using technology in ways that reinforce the pre-existing beliefs about the teachers' sage-on-the-stage culture (O'Dowd & Eberbach 2004) and amplify their previous methods of instruction (Xu & Warshauer 2004), without transforming them into a new teacher-learner relationship with learning process at the core. Students, for their own good, should positively explore what is there online to help understand the course content rather than passively being fed with information, as evidenced by Informant D's account. For example, using email and instant messenger for personal communication is a fashion. But data from Table 9 revealed that these tools were not widely used for pedagogical purpose as an investigatory tool to explore intercultural understanding of individual perspectives. This means that the contribution technology makes to FLE essentially depend on teachers' use of them – a

wide range of communication tools and information tools being available, to use them in daily life is one thing, how to use them for pedagogical purpose is another. But this never means that teachers should be passively in a 'wait-and-see' attitude. Rather, they should actively explore the potential of how to incorporate them into teaching instruction when condition allows.

5.2.5 Outcome assessment, problems, and perceptions

Unlike conventional student outcome assessment by direct test, ICC components consist of knowledge, attitudes, skills and awareness, the latter three of which are hard to test numerically. Byram (1997) suggests using a variety of means to compensate for the less quantifiable assessment. A viable way is to use portfolio assessment, containing a range of techniques from recording process evidence to displaying product. The data from this study suggests that there is a tendency to value the final product more than the process assessment. Moreover, the assessment of the final product seems to be in line with language skills evaluation, often in oral or written form, which most likely test cultural knowledge and awareness (Vogt 2006; Shi 2006).

As discussed in Chapter 4, barriers to implementing intercultural activities using Internet facilities vary. Technically, limited access and lack of technical support turn out to be an important factor that impedes implementation. Practically, time and participation are two problematic factors. The former needs a huge amount of effort and commitment in preparing tasks and maintaining activities while the latter demands a high level of collaboration and coordination across countries. Pedagogically, students' replies indicated that teachers' instruction might not be effective. Despite the challenges, the teachers' and students' perceptions of Internet-mediated intercultural learning turned out to be positive. It is clear that while the teachers and students acknowledged the alluring benefits of technology mediation, they believed that language class should be classroom based.

Chapter 6 Findings and implications

The final chapter begins with a summary of the main findings from the study, followed by a brief statement concerning the limitation of the study. It moves on to discuss the theoretical and practical implications of this study and makes some recommendations for future research.

6.1 *The main findings*

There are some findings that are considered important to this study: Firstly, in general, it has been identified that ICC development has been established as an important strategy by most of the investigated institutions. This finding builds up the cornerstone to promote an intercultural approach (Byram 1997; Corbett 2003) to FL learning in China, requiring a shift from the conventional native-speaker goal (CC-oriented) of FLE to an intercultural-speaker goal (Byram 1997; Kramsch 1998).

Secondly, although there is a shared view of balancing the teaching and learning of language and culture in language classes, there is still a strong influence of the traditional value of teaching linguistic and cultural knowledge. This may cause problems like resulting in an essentialist view of cultures (Piller 2007), cultural stereotyping and misunderstanding.

Thirdly, while textbooks remain the predominant source of cultural knowledge, Internet information tools are being widely used as a means of obtaining cultural input that is complementary to textbooks. However, the value of using communication technologies as investigatory tools is under explored.

Fourthly, in terms of designing tasks for intercultural learning by using Internet technologies, most of the activities are limited to information searching, using online audio-video and graphic resources, online reading and so forth. Tasks relating to communication tools do exist, but are not well developed. This phenomenon may increase the chances of getting access to the collective/national level of the target culture but reduce the opportunities of communicating with people from the target culture at the individual level, let alone achieving a constructivist view of intercultural communication (Piller, 2007).

Fifthly, the implementation of ICFLE has largely been impeded by technical, pedagogical and practical constraints. We need to be aware that ICFLE goes far beyond the class when in operation. Rather it is an institutional or even national commitment that demands interdisciplinary collaboration and support (Belz & Thorne 2006).

Last but not least, teachers and learners are enthusiastic and supportive of developing ICC by incorporating Internet technologies into traditional classroom instruction. This great motivation needs to be maintained through constant effort and empirical research.

However, the findings of this study have not been examined by inferential analysis due to the limitations of the data collection and analysis. Limited numbers of participants make it less likely to generate any significant inferential conclusions that apply to the whole population. Instead, a descriptive analysis was conducted to produce some general views of the samples surveyed. Qualitative data was equally insufficient as little evidence of the process of intercultural learning has been identified.

6.2 Implications and suggestions

In spite of the drawbacks, the main findings can still suggest some theoretical and practical implications that are worth discussing.

Theoretically, this study contributes to better understanding the contexts of the ICFLE in China's tertiary institutions. While ICFLE has developed fast in western FLE circles, it is now gaining its place in China. In the West, language and culture programs based on Vygotskian social constructivist principles and intercultural communication theories have proved to be an effective means for intercultural learning (Belz & Thorne 2006; O'Dowd 2006; Corbett 2003; Byram *et al.* 2001; Furstenburg *et al.* 2001), particularly for helping students improve their linguistic and intercultural competence by comparison and interaction with speakers of the target language. However, as culture and contexts differ, ICFLE has to be adapted to the Chinese situation. This localization needs great efforts of empirical studies, which will enrich the knowledge of ICFLE. This study, on the one hand, has attempted to provide some useful data for this commitment. On the other hand, it has helped to raise Chinese teachers' and students' awareness and to inform them of the possibilities of developing ICC via Internet technologies.

Practically, this study has ventured to study the haves and have-nots in current Chinese ICFLE. Some preliminary suggestions are worth noting. At the national level, syllabi should not only in principle urge teachers to shift their pedagogy from the culture-transmission mode to an intercultural approach, but also need to support teachers with practical frameworks and guidelines in terms of institutional policy, hardware and software preparation, and more importantly, pedagogical training. Only when teachers are confident with new technologies and innovative pedagogies, will they serve the students as best they can. Otherwise, it is a huge risk to push the teachers and students in a world of uncertainty. Therefore, it is of vital importance to get prepared for pedagogical frameworks. Basically,

two approaches seem viable to implement Internet-mediated intercultural teaching and learning, i.e. a task-based approach (Müller-Hartmann 2000) and project-based learning (Gu 2005). While the former is appropriate for short-term commitment, the latter suits long-term projects. Whichever the approach, teachers must be well trained and informed of the latest developments in practices, considering that technologies advance day by day. Only when Internet technologies are inherently integrated into the FL course syllabus, will blended instruction with technology-mediation enable both teachers and students to obtain an intercultural perspective towards teaching and learning cultures in FL classes.

At the institutional level, systematic support should be made available, including resource, administration, and faculty. The administration must be aware that ‘it is not enough simply to have the technological resources available for use; teachers must also know how to harness the educational capabilities of the technology’ (Moore *et al.* 1998: 111). Although in the survey the teachers did not indicate that they lacked the pedagogical experience for using technology, it is still worth including the technical support so that teachers can learn by doing to appreciate the benefits of networking and real time communication for enhancing intercultural competence. Moreover, the administration must document the assessment policy that help teachers with practical incentives, considering the huge workload the teachers take up. In a review of a 5-year study of a technology-enhanced FLE reform initiative (project-based courses and traditional courses with technology involvement) at a Chinese university, Xu & Warschauer (2004) observed that despite the sharp increase in the number of faculty using technology in classes, few were willing to teach project-based courses due to the huge demand in time and effort, which did not accrue any privileges and incentives. Thus, it mattered!

Appendix A: Glossary of Acronyms

FL/FLE	Foreign language/foreign language education
ICT	Information and communication technology
ICC	Intercultural communicative competence
ICFLE	Internet-mediated intercultural foreign language education
CLT	Communicative language teaching
CC	Communicative competence
NS	Native speaker
IS	Intercultural speaker
IC	Intercultural competence
ILT	Intercultural learning and teaching
CMC	Computer-mediated communication

Appendix B: Paper versions of Teacher Questionnaire and Learner Questionnaire

Survey of intercultural language education with Internet use in classroom (for teachers)

Section 1: Please indicate your opinion by putting a cross (X) in the appropriate column.

1–Not applicable; 2–Rarely applicable; 3–Often applicable; 4–Always applicable

No.	Statements	1	2	3	4
1.	Intercultural learning is an important aspect of foreign language education at my institute.				
2.	Intercultural learning is a specific outcome of foreign language education at my institute.				
3.	In my class, I expect my learners to develop...				
	reading skills.				
	writing skills.				
	listening skills.				
	speaking skills.				
	knowledge of our own culture.				
	knowledge of other cultures.				
	openness, tolerance and respect towards other cultures.				
	intercultural communicating skills.				
	understanding of different cultural perspectives.				
	other (Please specify here)				
4.	The tools I use are...				
	textbook.				
	courseware (CD-ROM, audio-video, etc.) supplement.				
	online materials (text, graphic, audio-visual, etc.).				
	online communication tools (such as email, instant messaging).				
	other (please specify here)				
5.	The cultural topics are drawn from...				
	textbooks.				

	my life experience.				
	learners' suggestions.				
	negotiation with my online partner teacher.				
	Other (Please specify here).				
6.	The materials I use for intercultural language teaching...				
	are up to date.				
	are informative.				
	are based on real life situations.				
	tend to over-generalize the target culture.				
	cover our own culture.				
	are not biased towards either culture.				
	other (Please specify here)				
7.	To teach learners the target language, it is important for me to...				
	deal with language as a linguistic system.				
	teach the relationship between language and culture.				
	integrate the target culture into instruction.				
	use multimedia resources.				
	use internet information tools.				
	use internet communication tools.				
	other (Please specify here)				
8.	In my class I use the following...				
	teacher presentation.				
	individual learner activities (e.g. question-answer, watching video, etc.).				
	collective learner activities (e.g. class discussion, role play, etc.).				
*	online activities within class (e.g. text reading, forum discussion, etc.).				
*	online learning and communication with a distance partner class.				
*	online learning system (e.g. Blackboard) without a partner class.				
	other (Please specify here)				
If you ticked '1' or '2' for the above starred '*' items, go to Question 13. If not, continue as normal.					
9.	I design online intercultural activities in class by using...				
	browsers and search engines				
	online reference tools (e.g. dictionary, Wikipedia)				
	text-based web pages				
	email				
	e-forum (e.g. discussion board)				
	blog				
	chat-room				
	instant messenger (e.g. MSN)				
	videoconferencing				
	other (Please specify here)				
10.	I engage my learners in using...				
	online reference tools for vocabulary and grammar learning.				
	browsers and search engines to access information on specific topics.				
	online audio materials.				

	emails to write to their partner class.				
	e-forums to discuss topics with their classmates.				
	e-forums to discuss topics with a partner class.				
	chatting facilities (text, voice) to 'talk' to partners.				
	Videoconferencing to talk to partners.				
	web page or blog for sharing learners' ideas.				
	other (Please specify here)				
11.	The main barriers to using Internet tools for intercultural activities are lack of...				
	funding.				
	access to network.				
	time in class.				
	time outside class for preparation.				
	technical support.				
	pedagogical experience.				
	participation by the learners or their partners.				
	other (Please specify here)				
12.	In my view using Internet tools for intercultural teaching...				
	enhances language proficiency in general.				
	enables real language use.				
	enriches cultural knowledge.				
	fosters skills in intercultural communication.				
	enhances intercultural understanding.				
	is as important as classroom teaching.				
	is more interesting than classroom teaching and learning.				
	allows great flexibility to classroom teaching.				
	encourages more active learning than in classroom.				
	other (Please specify here)				
13.	I assess learner outcomes by using...				
	student portfolio including process evidence (e.g. activity record) and final product (e.g. project).				
	interviews with learners about what they have learned.				
	observation of learners' language use in real situations.				
	learning diary.				
	presentation.				
	written test.				
	research papers/written assignments.				
	other (Please specify here)				

Section 2: Please choose the answers which are the closest to the facts you know about your teaching experience by putting the number in the box. We need these details to classify responses to the survey, but your identity will never be revealed.

14.	How long have you been a foreign language teacher?			
	1) less than 2 years	2) between 2 and 6 years	3) more than 6 years	
15.	What's your class size?			
	1) less than 20 students	2) between 20 and 40 students	3) more than 40 students	
16.	What's your final degree?			
	1) BA/BSc or equivalent	2) MA/MSc or equivalent	3) PhD/EdD or equivalent	
17.	How long have you been using the Internet?			

	1) less than 2 years	2) between 2 and 6 years	3) more than 6 years	
18.	How much time do you spend on the Internet every day on average?			
	1) Less than 1 hour	2) Between 1-3 hours	3) More than 3hrs	
19.	Where do you use the Internet most often?			
	1) At home	2) On Campus	3) At an Internet Cafe	
20.	Your name (Surname, First name):			
21.	Your gender:			
22.	Your email:			
23.	Your university:			

Survey of intercultural language education with Internet use in classroom
 (for learners)
 网络技术应用于课堂跨文化外语教育的问卷调查（学生卷）

Section 1: Please indicate your opinion by putting a cross (X) in the appropriate column

1 – Not applicable; 2 – Rarely applicable; 3 – Often applicable; 4 – Always applicable

No	Statements	1	2	3	4
1.	Intercultural learning is an important aspect of foreign language education in my language course.在我的外语课程中跨文化学习是外语教育中很重要的部份。				
2.	In language course, my aim is to develop...在外语课程学习中我的目标是……				
	reading skills.培养阅读技能。				
	writing skills. 培养写作技能。				
	listening skills. 培养听的技能。				
	speaking skills. 培养说的技能。				
	vocabulary and grammar 学习词汇和语法。				
	knowledge of other cultures.学习有关其他文化的知识。				
	knowledge of our own culture.了解自己的文化知识。				
	openness, tolerance and respect towards different cultures.学会对不同文化的开放、宽容和尊重。				
	intercultural communication skills.培养跨文化交际技能。				
	understanding of different cultural perspectives.加深对不同文化观点的理解。				
	other (Please specify here)				
3.	The tools I use are...我使用的学习工具是……				
	textbook.教科书。				
	courseware (CD-ROM, audio-video, etc.) supplement.课件等补充材料。				
	online materials (text, graphic, audio-visual, etc.).网络学习材料（文本，图像，视频音频等文件）				
	online communication tools (such as email, instant messaging).网上交流工具（如电子邮件，即时交互）				
	other (please specify here)				

4.	The cultural topics are drawn from...文化话题取自于.....				
	Textbooks 教科书。				
	teacher's choice.教师的选材。				
	our suggestions.我们学生的建议。				
	negotiation with our online partner class.和我们远程班级协商。				
	other (Please specify here)				
5.	The materials I use for intercultural language learning...我使用的跨文化外语学习材料.....				
	are up to date.紧跟时代。				
	are informative.信息丰富。				
	are based on real life situations.贴近生活。				
	tend to over-generalize the target culture.对目的语文化过度概括。				
	cover our own culture.包涵本国文化。				
	are not biased towards either culture.对不同文化没有厚此薄彼。				
	other (Please specify here)				
6.	To learn the target language, it is important for me to...对我而言，学好外语，重要的是.....				
	study language as a linguistic system.把语言作为一个体系来学。				
	study the relationship between language and culture.学习语言和文化的关系。				
	learn cultural knowledge from textbook.从教科书上获取文化知识。				
	learn cultural knowledge from our teacher.从老师那里学到文化知识。				
	use multimedia resources.使用多媒体资源。				
	use Internet information tools.使用网络信息工具。				
	use Internet communication tools. 使用网络交流工具。				
	other (Please specify here)				
7.	In our language course, we are given the following...在语言课程中，我们下列方式学习.....				
	teacher presentation.老师讲解。				
	individual learner activities (e.g. question-answer, watching video, etc.).个别活动（如课堂问答，观看录像等）。				
	collective learner activities (e.g. class discussion, role play, etc.).集体活动（如课堂讨论，角色扮演等）。				
*	online activities within class (e.g. text reading, forum discussion, etc.).本班网络活动（如网络文章阅读，论坛讨论等）。				
*	online learning and communication with a distance partner class (e.g. email, chatting, etc.).远程跨班学习交流（如电子邮件、网络聊天等交流活动）。				
*	online learning system (e.g. Blackboard) without a				

	partner class. 局域网络学习系统（如 Blackboard 平台等），没有远程班级。				
	other (Please specify here)				
<p align="center">If you ticked '1' or '2' for the above starred '*' items, go to Question 13.</p> <p align="center">If not, continue as normal.</p>					
8.	I use the following tools for online intercultural activities:我通过下列网络工具进行跨文化学习……				
	browsers and search engines 浏览器和搜索引擎。				
	online reference tools (e.g. dictionary, Wikipedia)网络参照工具（如网上辞典、维基百科等）。				
	text-based web pages 文本网页。				
	email 电子邮件				
	e-forum (e.g. discussion board)网络论坛				
	Blog 博客。				
	chat-room 聊天室。				
	instant messenger (e.g. MSN)				
	Videoconferencing 视频会议。				
	other (Please specify here)				
9.	In language classes, I use...在语言课堂上，我通过……				
	online reference tools for vocabulary and grammar learning.网上参照工具学习词汇和语法。				
	browsers and search engines to access information on specific topics.浏览和搜索引擎获取文化专题信息。				
	online audio materials.网上音频材料（练听力）。				
	emails to write to our partner class.电子邮件和我们的远程班级写信。				
	e-forums to discuss topics with my classmates.网络论坛和本班同学进行讨论。				
	e-forums to discuss topics with a partner class. 网络论坛和远程班级进行讨论。				
	chatting facilities (text, voice) to 'talk' to partners.聊天（文本，语音）工具和远程班级‘聊天’。				
	Videoconferencing to talk to partners.网络视频会议和远程班级聊天				
	web page or blog for sharing learners' ideas.网页或博客交流看法。				
	other (Please specify here)				
10.	In my self-study time, I use...在自学时间里，我通过……				
	online reference tools for vocabulary and grammar learning.				
	browsers and search engines to access information on specific topics.				
	online audio documents.				
	emails to write to our partner class.				
	e-forums to discuss topics with my classmates.				
	e-forums to discuss topics with a partner class.				
	chatting facilities (text, voice) to 'talk' to partners.				
	Videoconferencing to talk to partners.				

	web page or blog for sharing learners' ideas.				
	other (Please specify here)				
11.	The main barriers to using Internet tools for intercultural activities are lack of...通过网络工具进行跨文化学习活动的主要障碍是……				
	teacher instruction.缺少教师指导。				
	access to network.上网机会不够。				
	time in class.课上时间不够。				
	time outside class.课外时间不够。				
	technical support.缺少技术支持。				
	participation by my partners.对方的参与不够。				
	other (Please specify here)				
12.	In my view using Internet tools for intercultural learning...在我看来，跨文化学习中 使用网络工具……				
	enhances language proficiency in general.能提高总的语言水平。				
	enables real language use.能真实的运用语言。				
	enriches cultural knowledge.能丰富文化知识。				
	fosters skills in intercultural communication.能加强跨文化沟通技能。				
	enhances intercultural understanding.能增进跨文化理解。				
	is as important as classroom teaching.和课堂教学同等重要。				
	is more interesting than classroom teaching.比课堂教学更有趣。				
	allows great flexibility in teaching and learning.大大提高教与学的灵活性。				
	encourages more active learning.更为鼓励主动学习。				
13.	My learner outcomes are assessed by using...我的学习成果通过下列方式考评：				
	student portfolio including process evidence (e.g. activity records) and final product (e.g. project) 学生学习卷宗，包括过程证明（如活动记录）和最终成果（如项目汇报）。				
	interviews covering what I have learned 面试我学到的东西。				
	observation of my language use in real situations 在真实环境中观察我的语言运用表现。				
	learning diary 学习日记				
	presentation 口头汇报				
	written test 笔试				
	research papers/written assignments 研究论文/习作				
	other (Please specify here)				

Section 2: Please choose the answers which are the closest to the facts you know about your learning experience by putting the number in the box. We need these details to classify responses to the survey, but your identity will never be revealed.

14	What's your degree you are pursuing now? 你目前的在读学位是……			
	1) BA/BSc or equivalent	2) MA/MSc or equivalent	3) PhD/EdD or equivalent	
15	How long have you been using the Internet? 你的网龄是……			
	1) less than 2 years	2) between 2 and 6 years	3) more than 6 years	
16	How much time do you spend on the Internet every day on average? 你每天平均花多少时间上网?			
	1) Less than 1 hour	2) Between 1-3 hours	3) More than 3hrs	
17	Where do you use the Internet most often? 你经常在哪里上网?			
	1) At home/Dormitory 家/宿舍	2) On Campus 学校机房	3) At an Internet Café 校外网吧	
18	Your name (Surname, First name):你的姓名:			
19	Your gender:你的性别			
20	Your email: 你的电邮:			
21	Your major: 你的专业:			
22	Your university: 你的学校:			

Appendix C Follow-up question sheet

Questions:

1. Would you please briefly introduce the course(s) that you conduct regular intercultural activities with Internet technologies?
2. Would you please describe how you design the activities with Internet technologies?
3. Would you please summarise an example that is representative of your pedagogical plan?
4. What are the purposes of your teaching instruction for this plan?
5. What are the ups and downs of your teaching instruction for this plan?
6. What's your expectation for your future plan?

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